

REMARKS

At the outset, the Examiner is thanked for the thorough review and consideration of the pending application. The Office Action dated October 18, 2007 has been received and its contents carefully reviewed. As a preliminary matter, Applicants note the Disposition of Claims in the Office Action incorrectly identifies claims 18-20 as pending in the application. The correct status of claims should be claims 19-21 pending. Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in claims 20 and 21.

In the Office Action, claim 19 is rejected by the Examiner and claims 20 and 21 are objected to by the Examiner. With this response, claims 19 and 21 have been amended, and claim 20 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 22, 23 and 24 are newly added. Support for new claims 22, 23 and 24 can be found at Applicant's Figures 10, 13 and 14, respectively, and specification pages 15-16. No new matter is believed to be added. Accordingly, claims 19 and 21-24 remain pending in the application. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, claim 19 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,894,734, issued to Ihara (hereafter "Ihara") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,310,667, issued to Nakayoshi (hereafter "Nakayoshi") and U.S. Patent No. 5,844,255, issued to Suzuki et al. (hereinafter "Suzuki").

Claim 19 has been amended to recite the subject matter of claim 20, identified by the Examiner as being allowable. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 19 and claim 21, which depends therefrom, are allowable for at least this reason.

Applicants believe the application is in condition for allowance and early, favorable action is respectfully solicited. If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at (202) 496-7500 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance. All correspondence should continue to be sent to the below-listed address.

If these papers are not considered timely filed by the Patent and Trademark Office, then a petition is hereby made under 37 C.F.R. §1.136, and any additional fees required under 37

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Response to Office Action dated October 18, 2007

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C.F.R. §1.136 for any necessary extension of time, or any other fees required to complete the filing of this response, may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-0911.

Please credit any overpayment to deposit Account No. 50-0911.

Dated: January 17, 2008

Respectfully submitted,

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